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THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

"This year thou shalt die."

TIME, in its rapid and unceasing progress, has brought us to the commencement of a new year. It becomes us to pause and reflect. We may imagine that, in the course of our journey, we have reached an eminence. We should stop.—We should look back upon the road we have travelled, and forward to the country that lies before us. We should set up a pillar in remembrance of the goodness of God, and then, with better resolutions and greater diligence, pursue our way.

We enter on a new year, full of hope and expectation. We make our resolutions, and are sanguine in the belief that we shall fulfil them. We form our plans, and calculate with confidence on their accomplishment. We secure connexions, and expect they will be lasting. We lay a broad foundation of prosperity and happiness, and, in imagination, erect on it a superstructure that is firm and durable. We figure to ourselves a series of joyous events, uninterrupted by pain or misfortune.

If the past year has been favorable to us, we say of the present year, *it will be as the former, and much more abundant.* If the past year has disappointed our hopes, we seldom profit by our experience, but look forward to the future with the same assurance, and with the expectation that it will fully recompense us for the evils we have suffered.

This disposition to anticipate what is pleasant to us, is a part of our nature, and must not be condemned. It was implanted by our Creator for wise and good purposes. It increases our present joys, and is a powerful support under the evils of life. It would be well for us to remember, however, that our expectations *may* be disappointed, and that our bright prospects of felicity may be darkened by the shadow of death.

The history of the past year is already written. Its "tale has been told." We know, as far as it respects ourselves at least, by what events it was distinguished, by what joys and sorrows it was chequered. We

know how often it fulfilled, and how often it violated its promises; how often it gratified, and how often it disappointed our hopes. We know how much it added to, or subtracted from the stock of our friendships; how much of sweet and of bitter it mingled in our cup of life. We know how much of it has been foolishly wasted or wickedly perverted; how much business has been transacted, how much pleasure enjoyed, how much duty fulfilled and neglected.

The events which will make up the history of the present year, are yet to take place. They are known only to the Supreme Disposer. As *He* presents to us the successive pages of the book of our fate, we can read, but are unable of ourselves to turn over a single leaf. Were we allowed to pry into its contents, how much, even in the history of the present year, should we find that would be interesting to us! We might find that many new and unexpected scenes were to open before us, and many new and interesting objects to engage our attention. We might find that many important changes were to take place in our affairs; that we were to be raised to wealth, or reduced to poverty; elevated to power, or sunk into insignificance; exalted to honor, or consigned to infamy. We might find that new connexions were to be formed, and new friendships contracted, new pursuits engaged in, and new employments followed. We might find that the chief earthly staff

of our comfort was soon to fail us, that some friend was about to be put far from us, and our companion into darkness. We might find—let us think of it with seriousness, and may the thought suitably impress us—we might find, in characters which we could neither overlook, nor mistake, the awful sentence, *This year thou shalt die.*

What great, what unspeakable importance would this give in our estimation to the present year! How deep and sincere would be our repentance; how fervent our prayers; how ardent our desires after holiness; how unwearied our exertions to obtain an interest in Christ; how diligent our endeavours to crowd as much as possible of duty within the narrow limits of our probation!

We cannot read the book of our future fate! Its pages are in mercy concealed from our view. That this awful sentence would be found by more than one of us, is not only probable, but morally certain. The experience of the past will convince us of this.

At the close of each successive year of our past lives, many places have been vacant, in the circle of our friends, or in our worshipping assemblies, which, at the commencement of it, were filled; and the faces of many who had added to our private enjoyment, or joined in our public devotions, we shall behold no more in this world.

Many of them commenced the year with prospects as flattering as ours now are. They heard the solemn warnings of the short-

ness and uncertainty of life. They listened to the prediction addressed to them, as it is now addressed to us, that before the close of the year, some of them must die. Like us, they believed it of others, but felt secure themselves. They formed their plans as we do; they cherished expectations as we do; they promised to themselves health, and long life, and happiness as we do. The plans they formed, the expectations they cherished, the years of enjoyment they promised themselves, are at an end; and they who formed, and cherished, and expected them, are as if they had never been.

The years to come will probably, in this respect, be like those which are already past. The year on which we have now entered will give the same account of many of us, as is given by the years that are gone by, of our departed acquaintances and friends. They *have been*, but are not. They may be sought for, but cannot be found. The eyes of those who have seen them, shall see them no more.

Boast not thyself of tomorrow. Thou knowest not what a year, *thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* We cannot make a covenant with death. Riches cannot bribe it; power cannot control it; flatteries cannot sooth it; entreaties cannot soften it. When the commission is given, it will be fulfilled. When the warrant for our execution arrives, it will take effect. We sympathise with our unhappy fellow creature who is condemned to die. We tremble when we consider that his time

is so short. We are anxious that he should improve to the utmost the little space that is left to him. We forget that we ourselves are under sentence of death, and that it may be executed to-morrow, to-day, at any moment of our lives.

If it is recorded of only one of us in the book of his destiny, *this year thou shalt die*; who, we may ask with awful suspense, is that one? God only knows. It is in kindness and mercy that he has hidden from us the day of our death and the future events of our lives. The knowledge might unfit us for our duty, and defeat the ends of our destination. Did we know that the day of our death was at hand, we might give ourselves up to despair. We might be distracted by the number of duties to perform; and accomplish nothing. Did we know that it was remote, we might remit our exertions, relax our diligence, and delay preparation till it was too late to prepare. Did we know that pleasant scenes awaited us, and a series of prosperous and happy events, it might lead us to banish all serious thought, it might make us arrogant and presumptuous. Did we foresee that evils great and multiplied were to befall us, that a cup of bitterness was to be put into our hands, and that we should be compelled to drink it to the very dregs, we might be weighed down with the evil before the time, be unfitted for the discharge of the duties of life, and be rendered doubly miserable, by the foreknowledge of evil, and the actual suffering.

Uncertain what shall befall us, let us endeavour, through the grace of God, to be prepared for every event. Let us fortify our minds with such principles as will enable us to meet, in a becoming manner, the events of the present year. Let us live as if this year would be our last. Let those who have hitherto slighted the invitations, and neglected the warnings of the gospel, who

have been forgetful of their obligations to God, and careless about securing an interest in their Saviour, now, whilst there is a space for repentance and amendment, be excited to improve it, for the time will soon come, it may come this year, when the opportunity will exist no longer, when the sentence, already past, will be executed, *Thou shalt die!*

DYING EXERCISES OF JOHN SELDEN, ESQ.

Extracted from a late publication for the Christian Disciple.

“MR. SELDEN, sensible that his end was approaching, sent for his friends, Primate Usher, and Dr. Langbaine, with whom he discoursed concerning his state of mind. He observed that he had his study full of books and papers, of most subjects in the world; yet at that time he could not recollect any passage, wherein he could rest his soul, save out of the holy scriptures; wherein the most remarkable passage, that lay most upon his spirit, was Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. The import of these verses is the assurance of salvation, through the redemption of Christ, to all who live virtuously; a truth which he therefore regarded as the essence of the christian revelation.”

The remarkable words, on which Mr. Selden rested his eternal welfare, are these:—“For the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that deny-

ing ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Perhaps there are not four other verses in the New Testament, which give at once a more comprehensive and perspicuous view of the gospel of the blessed God; or which more clearly express the object of our Saviour's mission, and what we must do to be saved. The words *faith* and *repentance* are not here used, but the substance of what is intended by them is expressed. That faith in Christ, which is connected with salvation, disposes a person to pursue the course which the gospel or the “grace of God” teacheth. ED.

ESSAY ON SCRIPTURE.

It is an essential part of the character of the good man, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord." A devout affection for the will of God, as it is revealed to us in the sacred writings, enters into the nature, and is included in the description of true piety. For how can we prove our belief in the Deity or our love of God to be sincere, unless we pant after the knowledge of him, and are cordially disposed to receive any intimation he is pleased to make to us of his mind and will, in whatever way it may be communicated to us? He, whose mind is impressed with a due sense of the greatness and excellence of the wise and gracious Author of his being, will naturally be solicitous to acquire as clear and distinct ideas of his divine perfections as he can; and wish likewise to know, how he may render himself acceptable to him; and for these reasons, he will value the word of God. It will become the subject of his frequent study and meditation.

The design of this essay is to point out the necessity, the excellency, and variety of holy scripture.—Of the necessity, in which we stand of such a guide, to enlighten and inform our minds, a few considerations may be sufficient to convince any, who will bestow a proper attention on this point.

Do you doubt, whether a divine revelation be necessary? Consult your own minds; consider the extent of your rational faculties, and inquire how far they would be able to carry you, if unassisted

from above in your religious researches. Even when stretched to their utmost extent, you will soon find them incapable of carrying you to any great lengths, in pursuits of this nature, and be ready to own your imperfection and ignorance.

Consider the case of those who do not enjoy the benefit of revelation; of those countries, where the light of nature, or reason, is the only guide they have, to lead them to an acquaintance with their duty. How low and grovelling their conceptions! how sensual and debased their passions! What absurd notions of the Deity are entertained, and what unnatural customs commonly prevail among them! On this head travellers and voyagers will furnish you with sufficient information.

Consider the state of those nations, which were once esteemed the wisest, the most knowing and most civilized of mankind. Yet what a remarkable degree of ignorance did these, even the polished Greeks and Romans, betray, with regard to some of the plainest and most essential articles in theology! And how very defective besides were they in morals! How much bewildered were the ancient sages! What a variety of metaphysical systems did they form, and where shall we find, if we look into their writings, truths so interesting and sublime, or precepts so rational and commendable, delivered in so easy and intelligible a mode, and accompanied with such authority as those which the sacred oracles contain? Some

of the best men in the heathen world, we know, were fully sensible of their weakness, and the disadvantages, under which they labored, in matters of religion, and honestly confessed their wishes of a divine instructor. And if this was the case of the wiser part, what shall we think of the generality? Did they stand in no need of revelation? And shall not we feel ourselves happy in having this advantage above them, that we enjoy the holy scriptures?

Let us attend then next to their excellency and variety. The eloquence of scripture it is less necessary to mention; though not inferior, in many parts of the sacred volume, with regard to style and composition, to any human composition. We refer to what is of more consequence, to its contents, with reference to the great Author of our being, to our duty to him and to one another, to our present and final happiness.

No topics can be conceived of superior dignity and importance to those, of which the sacred writings treat. Such, for instance, as the nature and attributes of God, his universal providence and government, the origin and end of man, his obligations to the Deity, with our hopes and expectations from his mercy. Can any topics be named, that concern us more nearly, than these? What unbiassed reason may be imagined to suggest, relating to either of them, is confirmed and illustrated in the pages of inspiration; and new truths are added, to the discovery of which unenlightened reason alone would never have been equal.

What can be more worthy of our reception, then the doctrines of scripture in general, or what more conducive to our welfare, than its salutary rules and maxims? Almost every page of it abounds with representations of the infinite excellence and perfections of the divine Being. Persons, of almost the lowest degree of intellect, who are conversant with the bible, can scarcely avoid entertaining the most exalted conceptions of him in their minds. Revelation informs us, that there is one self-existent Being, the former of all things; the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only-wise God, the blessed and only Potentate, who dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto; the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh down, and with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. It teaches us the boundless extent of his power, that he filleth heaven and earth with his presence, that he supports the order, harmony, and beauty of the whole system of the universe, and that his agency is not only visible in the material, but also concerned in the events, that take place, in the moral world—continually overruling the thoughts, designs, and purposes of intelligent and moral agents, so as to make them as far as possible correspondent with the general plan of his providence, the great end of which is the advancement of his glory in the highest happiness of his creatures. It teaches us, to look upon the moral character of the Deity as absolutely unblemished, to consider him as a being

of perfect rectitude; one, who is every way worthy of our esteem and admiration, of our homage, reverence, trust, and confidence; as not far from any one of us, since it is in him we live, and move; to whom, in short, all other beings are indebted for the privileges of life, action, and enjoyment. It teaches us, that he is good to all, that his tender mercies are over all his works, that his bounty is inexhaustible, and his merey endureth forever. Such things as these are we taught in scripture, relative to the Supreme Being; and can we but esteem it on this account, as in the highest degree valuable?

To the scriptures too we owe the only certain accounts we have, of the origin of the human species, and its history in the earlier ages of the world. We are there told, that when every thing was made and settled, according to the constitution of nature, even as we now behold it, wisely and beneficially framed; having formed a variety of other species of living creatures, inferior to him in rank and capacity, "God said, let us make man,"—that he created him male and female—that our whole race proceeded from one single pair, who were the immediate offspring of heaven, and made in the image of God—that the progenitors of our species were placed at first by their benevolent Creator in a situation, which is described as not only pleasant and desirable in itself, but also as one, that was extremely favorable to their innocence and virtue—that they remained in this hap-

py spot, so long as they were contented to obey the commands of their Maker; but, unhappily for them, and for their posterity, their virtue did not long stand the test appointed for it; they were overcome by the force of temptation, and in consequence of it, were doomed to suffer the penalty annexed to their disobedience, becoming subject to death, together with all those other evils, of which sin, thus introduced into the world, has proved the fatal source. Experience fully confirms, what scripture positively declares, the degenerate state of mankind. That "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," is a truth, of which we have many melancholy proofs. Not only our first parents, but their descendants too, have thus generally exposed themselves to the divine displeasure. In the word of God however, for our encouragement and comfort, we are informed, that although we have all more or less apostatized from the path of our duty, and consequently forfeited the favor of God; the loss of which would endanger our best interests, "God hath so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life;"—that on the conditions of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we may be "justified freely by the grace of God," notwithstanding all our guilt and unworthiness; and that being thus "reconciled to God, by the death of his Son," we shall be

saved from wrath through him, and may extend our hopes to futurity.

It is the peculiar glory and excellence of the sacred writings, what distinguishes them from all others, and makes them more highly interesting, that in these the scheme of Christianity is contained. In the books of the Old Testament, the promise, granted to the woman, so early after the fall, of a conquest over her enemy and deceiver; the prediction, afterwards made to Abraham, of blessings to be derived from his progeny to the rest of

mankind; the various prophecies, that were uttered from time to time, relative to a Messiah, were preserved and handed down to succeeding ages. But in those of the *New*, the mystery of redemption is more clearly unfolded; the purposes of divine wisdom and mercy in the salvation of a fallen world are more openly and explicitly declared, and the process of man's recovery pointed out. In these more especially are "shewn the exceeding riches of God's grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

(*To be continued.*)

IMPRESSIVE EXTRACTS.

"Will animosity or reproaches have a better effect than argument and fair reasoning? If we think our neighbour has erred and strayed from the paths of truth, must we fall out with and abuse him, in order to bring him back into the right way? Will our treating him angrily or scornfully make him more attentive to instruction, or more open to conviction? Will he not rather be apt to conclude, that our passions and dispositions are more faulty than his faith, or more irregular than his judgment?"

"An intemperate fondness for our notions, sanctified by specious names, has laid waste our charity, and often made us violate the first principles of humanity and common justice.

"A considerable part of the best and worthiest of mankind have fallen victims to this barbarous principle. The chief blessings of society it has corrupted and poisoned; it has robbed men of their mutual affection, benevolence, and esteem; infused jealousies, kindled contentions, and spread variances far and wide; it has divided friends, families, and kindreds; crumbled communities into parties and factions; burst asunder the strongest obligations, both natural, civil, and religious."

J. Balguy.

"Be these our rules in teaching, and be these our instructions to our hearers. Let us be clothed with the same moderation, and with the same humility; and, as far as possible, prevail with our people to make themselves judge, from their own diligent study of the scriptures, what *true christianity is.*"

Archdeacon Blackburn.

"True fervor of spirit proceedeth from above; it is a beam from the Father of Lights, pure and benign, which at once enlightens and warms the mind; it is a ray from the Sun of righteousness, bright even at the beginning, and which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; it is a temper, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, compounded of love to God and zeal for his honor, attended with charity to men."

J. Logan.

"To judge other men's consciences is of so near affinity to governing them, that they that can allow themselves to do the former, want only power, not will or inclination, to offer at the other too, which puts the matter out of doubt, that when men of this temper complain of usurpation, it is not that they think it an offence in *itself*, but against them only; and that no con-

sciences ought to be free but their own.

"We shall carry truth and the knowledge of God to heaven with us. We shall carry purity thither, devotedness of our soul to God and our Redeemer; divine love and joy, if we have their beginnings here, with whatsoever else of real, permanent excellency, that hath a settled, fixed seat and place in our souls now, and shall there have them in perfection. But do we think we shall carry *strife* to heaven? Shall

we carry *anger* to heaven? *Envyings, heart-burnings, animosities, enmities, hatred* of our brethren and fellow christians, shall we carry these to heaven with us? Let us labor to divest ourselves, and strike off from our spirits, every thing that shall not go with us to heaven, or is equally unsuitable for our end and way, that there may be nothing to obstruct or hinder our abundant entrance, at length, into the *everlasting kingdom*." *J. Howe.*

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION ANSWERED BY THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

DID Jesus Christ perform miracles and give commandments in his own name, and by underived power and authority?

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. John iv. 34.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.—For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater things than these, that ye may marvel.—For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

John 5, 19, 20, 26, 30, 36, 43.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. John vi. 57.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. John vii. 16, 17.

He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world these things which I have heard of him. When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that *I do nothing of myself*; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. If I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say that he is your God. John viii. 26, 28, 54.

The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe

that the Father is in me and I in him. John x. 25—37, 38.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. John xi. 41—43.

For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. John xii. 49, 50.

The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake. As the Father gave me commandment even so I do. John xvi. 10, 11—31.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. John xv. 10.

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee,

the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. John xvii. 1—8.

As the question stated at the head of this article is one of great importance in theology, and one which has been answered very differently by different writers, we think it must be gratifying to our readers to have an answer in the words of our Saviour himself, rather than in our own language. His words are so plain and unequivocal as to preclude the necessity of any comment. If, after reading his answer, any one shall be disposed to assert, that Jesus wrought miracles and gave commandments in his *own name*, or by undervived power and authority, it may be well for this person to consider, whether he does not attempt the support of our Saviour's *independence*, at the expense of his *veracity*. If such repeated, unqualified assertions, made by Christ himself, to the Jews, his enemies, to his beloved apostles, and in solemn prayer to God his Father, may be explained to mean something which

is not so much as intimated in them, and so as to be consistent with an idea which they explicitly contradict, we wish to be informed on what ground his character is to be vindicated, as a "faithful and true witness;" and what he *ever did say*, which may not be so explained as to be consistent with a doctrine the very reverse of what he affirmed?

It has been said, that "prejudice and the love of system, may occasion us not merely to *think* but to *read* perversely." Perhaps this observation has never been verified in a more striking manner, than by those who find in the testimony of Jesus, satisfactory evidence, that he was an independent being or person. To a reflecting mind it must be evident, that *additions* must be made to every one of the texts which have been quoted, and to many others spoken by Christ, to save them from clearly contradicting the idea of his independence, and of his performing miracles or giving commandments in his own name. We have no disposition to place on a level with the unbelieving Jews, those christians who thus add to the testimony of Jesus;

but it may be proper for them to consider, whether there be not a similarity in one particular. Our Saviour said to the Jews, "I am come in MY FATHER'S NAME, and ye receive me not: if another come in his OWN NAME, him ye will receive." How many, who profess to be christians, discover an unwillingness to receive the Lord Jesus on any other condition, than that he *came in his own name*, as the independent Jehovah; although his own testimony is directly against the condition on which they profess to receive him!

The words of Christ, last quoted, were probably designed to imply, that if he had come in his *own name*, it would have been a proof that he was an *impostor*, and that the unbelieving Jews would have been more ready to receive an impostor, than they were to receive him. Yet the very thing which would have been sufficient in his own view, to prove him an impostor, is now contended for as essential to his true character.—"*If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: It is my FATHER that honoreth me, of whom ye say, that he is YOUR GOD.*"

ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE THE MINDS OF PIOUS CHRISTIANS.

For the Christian Disciple

IT is an excellence in the "Christian Disciple," designed, as it is, for popular use, and for the promotion of practical piety, that it excludes every thing which is *merely* controversial. I have some diffidence therefore in offering you the following thoughts on a sub-

ject, which has often been discussed with the bitter spirit of controversy by professing christians. But my design is rather to reconcile, than to irritate, the serious inquirer after truth, by the present communication.

In conversation with some sincere christians, I have noticed,

that two considerations furnished the principal objections in their minds to the doctrine of the divine *unity*. One consideration is, that Christ is represented in some passages of scripture as possessing divine and infinitely glorious attributes, and as deserving religious worship; which, it is said, would not be applied to him, unless he were really and truly God. But let it be recollected, that Christ is the Representative and Image, the Messenger and Ambassador of the "*Invisible*" Deity, to this our world. "*No man hath seen God at any time.*" He is the immortal, invisible Spirit. But he has sent the *Messiah*, or *Christ*, as a Messenger, to offer his grace, and to give instructions to mankind; and as his Representative, or *Image*, to display the power, the wisdom, and goodness of his own divine perfections. Christ, then, would speak in the name, and by the authority of God. His miracles, his works also, are the works of God. As the Deity works in and by him, and hath given him all power, he is enabled to display divine ability. The sacred writers, therefore, speaking of him, might justly declare, that it was the finger of God, or the power of God, operating, when he performed works beyond the ability of any created being. So, in fact, it is often represented by the holy evangelists. "The Father, who dwelleth in me, he does the works." "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles and wonders, which God did by him." It also appears highly fitting and suitable, con-

sidering Christ as the Messenger and Representative of the Deity, that we should render him religious homage and honors, as we seem to be required in the gospels. Nor do we, by rendering such honor and praise to Christ, give God's glory to another. Then are we guilty of so great a sin, when we worship idols and false gods. But when we present our praises and devout homage to Christ, we honor him who comes in God's name, and whom he commands us to honor: and ultimately, indeed, we thus give glory to God, who constituted him the dispenser of immortal blessings to man, and endued him with divine power to accomplish the work and maintain the character of our Saviour from death and misery. "God hath exalted him at his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour." And "all must acknowledge him to be Lord and Christ, to the glory of God the Father." Scripture carefully examined, with the idea here suggested, we think, will serve to remove the difficulties which some serious christians have felt on this subject, and render the doctrine comparatively plain and intelligible.

The other consideration, which creates an objection in the view of some pious people to the doctrine of the divine *unity*, is this—that one who is adequate to save sinful men must be no other than God. It will be readily admitted, that no one is able to save but God. With him only is the grace to pardon, and the power to save sinners. But we must not undertake to

prescribe in what way he shall do this. We all acknowledge God to be the original source of life, power, wisdom, and grace. He only is all-sufficient in himself. Yet we know that he displays his power, and wisdom, and communicates his blessings and his grace, mediately and by instruments: and that this mode of operating by no means deprives him of the glory of the work performed, or the favor bestowed. The pious man considers God as operating, in all the enjoyments and privileges of life. So we think it will appear to those, who carefully examine the holy scriptures, that our salvation is primarily from God, though he has appointed Jesus Christ to be our immediate Deliverer, Redeemer, and Saviour.—We call great and good men, who are instrumental in securing to us important privileges and benefits; we call such our benefactors, or deliverers. Yet surely, we mean not to rob God of the glory of all the good thus procured for us. And where we

read, that “Christ is the Captain or Leader of our salvation”—that “God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour”—that “God so loved the world, as to send his Son, that those who believe in him might have eternal life.” All these and the like passages, though they represent Christ as our Redeemer, fully and clearly imply, that he is so by the pleasure and purpose of God. Thus when we believe and trust in Christ for salvation, we do it because God has commanded it; and because he has appointed him to be the dispenser of spiritual and immortal blessings. We may say then, in the words of the apostle Peter, (1 Epist. chap. i. ver. 21.) “who *by* him do believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; THAT YOUR FAITH AND HOPE MIGHT BE IN GOD:” or in the words of Paul, “UNTO US THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER; OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS; AND ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS.” A. B.

Illustrations of passages in the New Testament, which refer to climate, places, offices, sentiments, manners, and customs, among the Jews, in the time of our Saviour.

“In reading the New Testament, we must always remember, that it was first preached by Jews, and in Judea.” Beaus. and L’Enf. Introd.

25.

Luke iii. 17. “Whose FAN is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.”

CAMPBELL more literally translates, “*his winnowing shovel is in his hand.*” The ancient eastern mode of threshing and of winnowing, were very different from those which are in use with our farmers. There is an engraving between pages 82 and 83 of Taylor’s Fragments, or appendix to Calmet’s Dictionary, which conveys very clear conceptions of both operations. But

all which is necessary for the illustration of this text, is perhaps expressed with sufficient fulness in the extract which follows.

"I several times saw how corn was threshed in Egypt. Every peasant chose for himself, in the open field, a smooth plat of ground, from eighty to a hundred paces in circumference. Hither was brought, on camels or asses, the corn in sheaves, of which was formed a ring of six or eight feet wide, and of two feet high. Two oxen drew a sledge over the circle of sheaves; and to the sledge was attached a chair, in which a man sat to guide the cattle, and to keep them in motion. When the corn was thus separated from the ear, they threw the grains into the air, *with a shovel*, to cleanse them." Neibuhr's Trav. v. i. p. 89.

In the engraving to which we have referred, a peasant is seen within the circle which is formed by the sheaves of grain, with a fork, or rake, throwing that portion of the straw which had not passed under the sledge, into the way in which the cattle would pass over it, in their next passage round the threshing floor; and just without the circle is another peasant, with a *small shovel*, which has a long handle, engaged in winnowing a quantity of the corn which is already threshed, by throwing it up against the wind, which blows away the chaff, but leaves the grains of corn, whose weight brings them to the ground.

The instrument which has long been in use among us in winnowing grain, is called a *fan*; and the same general ideas are

suggested to our minds, in supposing this to have been the instrument to which John alluded, as by more correct conceptions of it. Yet it cannot, I think, be wholly uninteresting to any one, to know that he has in his mind precisely the same images, which were in the minds of a Jewish audience, when hearing the expressions of the New Testament. —The chaff, blown to a small distance, and formed into a heap, was burned; and the fire was quenched only by *the destruction* of the chaff. So, said John to the Jews, will it be with you, notwithstanding your descent from Abraham, if ye repent not.

26.

Luke iii. 19, 20. "Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias, *his brother Philip's wife*; and for all the evils which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison."

That Herod, a civil governor, who had the power of punishing what he thought an indignity, should imprison a man who had dared to accuse him of crimes, is by no means a circumstance to excite peculiar attention. But this passage demands our notice from a higher consideration. It has been adduced by infidels, to invalidate the authority of the New Testament. We will state the objection, and in as short a compass as we can, will give what we deem an entirely satisfactory reply to it.

The evangelists say, that John reproved Herod for, or on account of Herodias, *his brother Philip's wife*. This, say the objectors, can be no other than *Phi-*

lip the tetrarch. But Josephus, who has also given an account of this marriage, says, that the first husband of Herodias was "Herod, a son of Herod the great, by Mariamne, daughter of Simon the high priest. They had a daughter, whose name was Salome; after whose birth Herodias, in utter violation of the laws of her country, left her husband, then living, and married Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, *her husband's brother* by the father's side." For a more detailed account of this marriage, we refer the reader to the Jewish Antiquities, B. 18. c. 6. The question then is, are the evangelists, or is Josephus wrong; or, are they both right?

Basnage has endeavoured to shew, that the error belongs to Josephus. But the supposition of error is unnecessary, as there is actually no contradiction. The accounts, candidly, and carefully examined, will be acknowledged, I think, most perfectly to harmonize.

Both accounts agree in the facts, that the first husband of Herodias was *a son of Herod the great*; and that it was *Herod the tetrarch*, who seduced her from her husband. The only disagreement therefore, if indeed there be any, respects the name of this son of Herod, to whom Herodias was first married. Let it be observed then, 1. that by the will of Herod the great, which was made but a short time before his death, Herod, the son of Mariamne, was utterly excluded from any succession in the government, and reduced to the condition of *a private man.* (An-

tiquities B. 17. c. 8.) By this will, Archelaus succeeded his father in the government of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Herod Antipas was made tetrarch of Galilee and Pacæa; and Philip tetrarch of Traconitis, and the neighbouring countries. A few cities were also given to his favorite sister Salome. 2. The evangelists uniformly, in naming those who had offices and titles, name also their titles and offices. In the account of the death of John the baptist, and of this marriage of Herod Antipas, all the evangelists give Herod his title. But no title is given, and no office is named, in speaking of Philip, whom they call the first husband of Herodias. It is scarcely to be doubted therefore, that this Philip was *a private man.* 3. It was very common among the ancients, Jews as well as heathens, for persons to have two names; and to be called sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other. We have examples in the New Testament of Simon, who is called Peter; of Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddæus; of Thomas, who was called Dydimus; of Simeon, who was called Niger; and of Saul, who was also called Paul. Josephus himself calls Caiaphas, the high priest, Joseph; though he has indeed told us, that he was also called Caiaphas. Suppose then that this Herod, whom he calls the first husband of Herodias, was also called Philip, and every difficulty on the subject vanishes.

I do not believe that any Jew, in the first centuries, in comparing the narratives of the evan-

gelists and of Josephus, would have had a thought that, in these different names, there was any thing like contradiction. But if this be unsatisfactory, we have testimonies in direct support of the evangelists. Gorionides says, "Herodias was first married to Philip, and was taken away from him by Herod Antipas." The old Hebrew chronicle says, "Antipas took the wife of his

brother Philip, he being yet living, and had children by her;" and so also says an old chronicle of the second temple. Still we believe, that he was known as Philip Herod, and was called sometimes by one name, and sometimes by the other.

See Lardner, v. 1. pp. 16, 17. 348. 389—397. And Whitby on Matthew xiv. 3.

REMARKABLE EVENTS RELATING TO JERUSALEM.

THE following summary was abridged from Chateaubriand's travels.

Jerusalem was founded by Melchizedeck in the year of the world 2023, and was called Salem, which signifies *peace*.

Fifty years after it was taken by the Jebusites, and called Jerusalem.

Joshua conquered what is called the lower town the fifth year after his arrival in Canaan. The upper town was not taken from the Jebusites until the days of David: he subdued the descendants of Jebus, and made additions to their fortress.

Solomon enlarged their city, and built the first temple.

Five years after the death of Solomon the city was plundered by the king of Egypt. It was pillaged again one hundred and fifty years after by Joas, king of Israel.

In the days of Manasseh it was conquered by the Assyrians, and in the days of Zedekiah the foundation of the city was razed and the temple burnt by Nebuchadnezzar. This event happened 470 years 6 months and 10 days from

the time the foundation of the temple was laid by Solomon; and in the year of the world 3513—about 600 years before Christ.

After 70 years captivity, Zerubbabel began to build the city and the temple. Alexander the great visited the city in the year of the world 3583.

Ptolemy, king of Egypt, conquered the city; from him it was taken by Antiochus the great; he however afterwards ceded it to Ptolemy Evergetes. Antiochus Epiphanes again plundered the city.

The Maccabees restored liberty to their country, and defended it against the kings of Asia.

At the time of the dispute about the crown between Aristobolus and Hireanus, Pompey besieged and took the temple. Crassus afterwards plundered this august monument, which Pompey respected.

The Parthians took Jerusalem, and carried Hireanus into captivity. By the aid of the Romans, Herod the great was made king. In the time of his reign our Saviour was born.

On the death of Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the great, Judea was reduced to a Roman province.

The Jews having revolted, Titus besieged and took Jerusalem. During the siege 200,000 Jews perished by famine. From the fourteenth of April, A. D. 71, to the first of July, 115,180 dead bodies were carried out at a single gate. 1,100,000 Jews perished in Jerusalem, and 238,460 in other parts of Judea. In this calculation I comprehend not the women and children, nor the aged, destroyed by famine, seditions, and flames. 99,200 prisoners were reserved for the triumph of Titus. Some of these were doomed to kill one another, to make sport for the Romans; others were sold at auction, at the rate of 30 persons for a denarius. The temple was burnt 38 years after the death of Christ. Adrian completed the destruction of what Titus had left standing.

Adrian built the new city on the spot which it occupies at this day, and included Mount Calvary. Some commotions appear to have taken place in Judea under the Emperors Antonius, Septimus, Severus, and Caracalla.

Constantine overthrew the idols erected on the sepulchre of our Saviour, and consecrated the sacred scenes by the edifices that are seen still upon them.

Thirty seven years after, Julian in vain assembled the Jews, to rebuild the temple.

We find a revolt of the Jews under Justinian, A. D. 501. During the reign of this empe-

ror, Jerusalem was elevated to the patriarchal dignity.

Jerusalem was taken by Cosroes, king of Persia, A. D. 613. The Jews purchased of the conqueror 90,000 christians, and put them to death.

A. D. 627, Heraclius defeated Cosroes, recovered the true cross, and carried it back to Jerusalem.

Nine years after, Omar, the third in succession from Mahomet, took Jerusalem, after a siege of four months.

Ahmed, a Turk, conquered Jerusalem A. D. 868—but his son being defeated by the chalik of Bagdad, the Holy city returned again under their dominion, A. D. 905.

Mahomet Ikschid, another Turk, subdued Jerusalem A. D. 936. A Turk, named Ortok, made himself master of Jerusalem A. D. 984, and his children reigned after his death. Mostali, chalik of Egypt, drove the Ortokides out of Jerusalem.

In A. D. 996, Hakem, or Haquen, persecuted the christians at Jerusalem.

In A. D. 1076, Meleschah took the city and ravaged the whole country. The Ortokides retook the city. They were again driven out by the Fatamites. The Fatamites were masters of Jerusalem, when the Crusaders appeared on the frontier of Palestine.

Godfrey, accompanied by Baldwin and many other knights, with Peter the Hermit, appeared on the frontiers of Palestine with an army. A. D. 1099. On the 12th of July they took Jerusalem. Godfrey was

elected king—and was succeeded by his brother Baldwin.

Saladin wrested the Holy Land from these new masters. The soldiers of Saladin pulled down a gold cross, erected above the temple, dragged it through the streets to the top of Mount Zion, where they broke it to pieces. Philip Augustus, and Richard, the English monarch, arrived too late to save the Holy city, but they took Ptolemais. Soon after this Saladin died. He directed that on the day of his funeral, a shroud should be carried on the point of a spear, and a herald proclaim with a loud voice: "Saladin, the conqueror of Asia, out of all the fruits of his victories, carries with him only this shroud."

In 1242, Saleh Ismael gained possession of Jerusalem; but the Sultan of Egypt retook it and slaughtered the inhabitants.

The famous Bibars Bondic Dari became sultan in Egypt, 1263. He repaired Jerusalem. Kalaoun, the heir of Dari, in 1291 expelled the christians from the Holy Land, after they had maintained themselves 192 years in their conquests, and reigned 88 at Jerusalem. The sultans of Egypt kept their conquests till 1382. At this time the Mamelukes usurped the supreme authority of Egypt, and gave a new form of government to Palestine. Selim put an end to all these revolutions in 1517, by the reduction of Egypt and Syria.

"There are yet persons who believe, on the authority of certain trite sarcasms, that the kingdom of Jerusalem was a miserable little valley, wholly unworthy of the pompous name with which it is dignified. The whole of the sacred scripture, the pagan authors, the travellers in Palestine, from the earliest times, down to the present day, unanimously bear testimony to the fertility of Judea. Could it appear surprising, however, if so fruitful a country had become barren after such repeated devastations? *Seventeen times* has Jerusalem been pillaged; millions of men have been slaughtered within its walls, and this massacre may be said still to continue. No other city has experienced such a fate. This protracted and almost supernatural punishment announces unexampled guilt—guilt which no chastisement is capable of expiating. In this country, consigned to the ravages of fire and sword, the uncultivated land has lost that fertility which it derived from human toil; the springs have been buried beneath heaps of rubbish; the soil of the mountains, being no longer kept up by the industry of the vine-dresser, has been hurried down into the vallies; and the eminences, once covered with woods of sycamores, now present to view nought but parched and barren hills."

In view of the fate of Jerusalem, let favored, ungrateful nations fear and tremble!

EXPOSITIONS SOLICITED.

To the Editor of the Christian Disciple.

YOUR periodical work, which deserves much celebrity, well calculated to promote union, to inspire love, to establish peace, and to convey a great fund of useful information to your numerous readers, is thought to be a good medium, if your approbation coincides with one who is a subscriber, to insert a few scriptural passages for exposition; thinking that some intelligent correspondent of the Christian Disciple might diffuse some light upon various passages of scripture, which are by some called ambiguous, and *things hard to be understood*. It is desired that the passages alluded to, would be candidly examined, and plainly solved to every impartial mind. Perhaps the subsequent passages may appear too familiar, for any particular attention to be paid to them; but remem-

ber, *there are many babes in Christ, which desire to be fed with the sincere milk of the word*. Three passages selected now will suffice for the present, and if found worthy to be inserted and explained in your valuable work, others will be communicated as soon as convenient. The first passage is taken from St. Matthew, 15th chapter, beginning at the 21st verse to the conclusion of the 28th. The second passage is selected from St. Matthew, 18th chapter, beginning at the 7th verse to the end of the 14th verse. The third passage is taken from St. Mark, 5th chapter, from the commencement of the chapter to the end of the 20th verse. May the *illustrations* of the above passages, *strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees*.
R. C.

ON THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THE LATE CHIEF JUSTICE PARSONS.

[The following is an extract from a sermon preached at the New South Church in Boston, on the occasion of the death of Chief Justice Parsons. The testimony of such a man as this, to the truth of christianity, ought to be generally known, as it cannot but command attention. It may be necessary to premise, that the former part of the discourse had been occupied with an exhibition of the adequacy and adaptation of the gospel, 1. To the speculative wants of man. 2. To his wants as an active being; and 3. To his sorrows as a being placed in a state of trial and suffering.

4. "The fourth point which we proposed to consider was the adequacy of the christian religion to support man in the prospect of death. I wish to illustrate this by an appeal to fact. I shall bring before you the example of that great and venerable man, whose recent loss our country is called to lament. The character of such a man is the property of the public; and though I am little conversant with the language of pulpit panegyric, I

feel you have a right to have it exhibited to you. I am not however about to speak of the qualities which constituted his intellectual greatness; of the astonishing extent and variety of his knowledge; of his intuitive sagacity; of his all but miraculous memory; of the purity and loftiness of the great maxims which governed his life; of his disinterestedness; of his fidelity to his principles in all the various relations which he sustained, as a man, a citizen, a counsellor, a statesman, a judge; or of those kind & amiable affections, which endeared him most where a man is best known, in the bosom of his family, and the circle of his most intimate friends. These qualities will hereafter be spoken of, by one the most worthy to speak of them as they deserve.* I mean only to speak of what has fallen peculiarly within my own knowledge—of his religious principles, and the support which they gave him in the hour of death.

“Chief Justice Parsons added one more to the long list of the greatest and most revered names which live on record, who have esteemed it the privilege of their nature to sit at the feet of Jesus, and be numbered among his disciples. ‘I examined’—he was accustomed to say to his friends—‘the proofs and weighed the objections to christianity many years ago, with the accuracy of a lawyer; and the result was so entire a conviction of its truth, that

I have only to regret that my belief has not more completely influenced my conduct.’ Now we are to recollect that this was the testimony of a perfectly disinterested witness; not of a priest, who may be suspected of professional bias—That it was the testimony of a lawyer, all whose life had been passed in sifting evidence, balancing arguments, unravelling sophistry, and detecting imposture—That it was testimony not only given freely to his friends in private; but declared voluntarily and openly to the world, by a public profession in this church.† We are to remark too, that his was a discriminating and rational belief. It was not tinged with the deep and melancholy enthusiasm of Pascal, or darkened by the superstition of Johnson. It was founded on a calm & free examination of all the parts of the christian system, as well as the general evidence of the whole. It was the religion of Grotius, and Newton, and Locke, kindred excellences! whose names take no dishonor from the one which I have now presumed to associate with theirs. Nor was the religion of Christ a subject to which he was contented to give only a slight and superficial examination. He delighted to bring all the powers of his mighty mind to assist him in sounding it to its depths. He was a proficient even in the technics of theology; and was a biblical critic of that eminence

* A discourse was delivered on the afternoon of the same day, by Rev. President Kirkland.

† Judge Parsons was a communicant at the New South Church.

that he could always interest, and often astonish, by the accuracy and originality of his views, those whose profession makes these studies the occupation of their lives. His belief was not merely a speculative assent to the truth and doctrines of the gospel. It produced in him a sentiment of habitual and practical piety, which accompanied him to the last moment of rational life. Its strength and its power to support him were most seen, when he needed it most. He possessed a temperament so peculiarly and delicately organized, that a slight shock was often sufficient to discompose it; and it might have been feared that the approach of dissolution would have filled him with agitation and alarm. But by the blessing of God his faith sustained him without fainting in the hour of trial; and he was enabled to make all his preparations for death with more calmness than he could for several years before summon for the arrangements of an ordinary journey. I found him in his last hours uniformly tranquil and collected, stedfast in his faith and hope, though without any ostentation of triumphant confidence; not affecting indifference to a life so dear to his family, but convinced of the better wisdom, and rejoicing in the benignant providence of God; humbly trusting—not in a life exempt from infirmities as constituting a claim on the divine justice—but in the pardoning mercy of God, declared by his Son to penitent man. His constant prayer, which I believe he did not fail in a single instance

to desire me to put up for him, was, that whether living or dying, he might be submissive and resigned; and—except some affectionate recognitions of his family—the last coherent words, which this good and venerable man uttered, were a request to me to repeat this petition for him.

“My friends, such a scene as this speaks volumes on the adequacy of the gospel to support us in the hour of death. I will not weaken its impression by dwelling on it. But I have one word to say on the testimony of such a man as this, at such an hour, to the truth of the gospel. The belief of the evidences of christianity, as far as regards an ability to answer all the minor objections which a perverted ingenuity may easily bring to them, must necessarily, with a great part of mankind, be a business of authority. I would ask then those, who have entertained doubts on this subject, to come with me to the dying chamber of this great man. Consider that there never was a human being more capable of forming a correct opinion on such a subject than he who lies before you; that he has given to it the fullest and most deliberate examination; that he is aware that he is about to enter the presence of a God, who must view hypocrisy with abhorrence; and that it is impossible that he can have any wish or motive to deceive you. You would not hesitate to trust to the decision of his wisdom and integrity from the bench of justice, your lives, your fortunes, your best earthly hopes. Why should

not your respect extend to his judgment, formed while his faculties possessed all their vigor, and now pronounced from the bed of death, on a subject in which you and he are both equally and eternally interested? Hear then this man, to whom all science is familiar; this profound sage; this master of human reason; hear him declare with all the solemnity which the thought of death can impart to his declaration: *'I could as soon doubt of the existence of God himself, as of the truth of the christian religion.'** Hear these words my friends, and then turn and listen to the accents in which infidelity lifts her puny voice, and pronounces that to be little, which such a mind as this felt to be great; and as you listen weep for

the infatuation with which youth and vanity can be blinded! What lofty heights of wisdom and of science ought he to have reached, who is entitled to look down with contempt on the faith and hope of such a man as this? What weight of years, what character for consistency and judgment, what habits of patient investigation ought he to possess, who ventures to pronounce such a man as this ignorant of his premises, and mistaken in his conclusions! What more than human sagacity, what Angelic knowledge ought he be able to command, who dares to declare that to be a delusion and absurdity, which this sublime Intelligence confessed to be "the wisdom of God, and the power of God to salvation!"

SERIOUS PREACHING.

THIS subject occupied a place in the last number of the Christian Disciple, and from its importance is entitled to a more extended discussion. I observed in my last communication, that seriousness of preaching has its foundation in seriousness of character, and that its great object is to impress those truths of religion which interest the heart, and are the springs and rules of a holy life. I observed that the serious preacher chooses those subjects for the pulpit, which have the most direct and powerful influence on the characters of hearers, that he spares no labor of mind to collect on these top-

ics the clearest, and most useful and striking thoughts; and that he strives to attract attention to them, by surrounding them with those embellishments of style and imagination, which they admit and deserve. I shall now proceed in the discussion.

The serious preacher is not satisfied with furnishing a variety of thoughts, or with rivetting attention. He is anxious to turn to account the attention which he excites, and to give to his thoughts and reasonings a force, an edge, an impressiveness, which will secure their entrance into the heart and conscience, and subdue the will to

* These were his words to me two days before his death.

the obedience of God. It is not enough that the audience hang on his lips whilst he speaks, and afterwards celebrate his rich and fervid eloquence. He wishes to leave a deep conviction of the necessity, and excellence, and happiness of a life of piety, to turn the thoughts of hearers inward upon their own characters, to fill them—not with admiration of the speaker—but with a just concern for themselves, and with a strong desire of that purity and felicity to which the Gospel invites them. How is this *impressiveness* to be communicated to a discourse? A few remarks only can now be offered on this interesting question.

To render preaching impressive, it is very necessary that the preacher carry with him through the labor of composition a sense of the infinite importance of reaching the hearts and consciences of his hearers. He should recollect distinctly whilst he writes, that the everlasting happiness of men depends on the truth he inculcates. He should recollect that the Gospel which he dispenses is not a subtle science or an amusing speculation; but the word of God, the message which Jesus brought from heaven, the doctrine of pardon and immortality, the great instrument of enlightening, purifying, and preparing the mind for future felicity. He should remember that the interests, which he is called to promote, differ widely from the fleeting interests of the world, that the soul, on which he is to operate, is an imperishable princi-

ple, and has capacities of perpetual progress, that the virtues which he labors to recommend will never die, but be perfected in heaven; and that the sins, against which he warns, lead down to hell. These sentiments should be recalled at the moment of composition, and that they may then be revived, they should at other periods be invited and contemplated with seriousness. In fact, they should never be long absent from the mind of a minister. A sense of the greatness of the interests committed to him, should be incorporated with all his thoughts, and should form a part of his character. This will give energy to all his pastoral duties. It will awaken his intellect, impart vividness to his conceptions, and throw a warmth of colouring over his delineations. Who does not know the power of the heart over the understanding? He, whose heart enters into his work, will write with a glow and force which no other cause could produce.

Is it thought that the minister can find no great difficulty in keeping alive the sense of the importance of religion, in the composition of his sermon? You who think thus, know little of human nature. You imagine, that because the minister has little to do but to revolve the truths of religion, he can hardly help feeling their magnitude. But the fact is, that his very familiarity with them has a tendency to diminish their power over his affections; and nothing but voluntary effort can give steadiness and permanency to the senti-

ments by which he ought to be governed. The flame must be fed and cherished by a judicious care, or it will grow dim and expire. It is as true in the life of the minister as of every other man, that whatever is done regularly, is very apt to become a mechanical labor. The minister, who must furnish a weekly sermon, is in great danger of considering his sermon as a task, and of writing because he is expected to write, instead of writing for the express purpose of producing important effects on the human character. If he spread over the customary number of his pages, he is apt to be satisfied. He thinks his work is done. He ought to think that nothing is done unless he has endeavoured to give to his thoughts a force which will impel to duty, and an edge and sharpness which will pierce the conscience. He ought to remember that he is not a common laborer, hired to perform a given quantity of work, and that he earns his wages by drudging through the stipulated service. He should feel that to be disinterested, zealous and sincere, is the very work to which he is pledged, and that the good minister looks for his recompense in the holiness and virtue of those whom he instructs; and in the favor of that Being who searches his heart.

But to give impressiveness to a discourse, it is not enough that a minister bring with him a sense of the importance of religion *in general*. He should excite an interest in the particular topic which he purposes to discuss. Would he exhibit a per-

fection of God? let him revolve it, till he feels himself its reality, and till his own breast is warmed with the devout affections which it ought to inspire. Is it a christian virtue he would inculcate? let him dwell on its beauty, and excellence, and benefits, till he earnestly loves it, and is himself resolved to practise it. Is it a sin which he would hold up to detestation? let him reflect on its odiousness and ruinous effects, until the abhorrence and indignation which he wishes to communicate sting his own soul. In every sermon, a preacher should propose some *definite impression* on the minds of his hearers, and he should labor to make first this impression on himself. Sympathy is the chord he should aim to touch. He should remember the contagiousness of human feelings, and from the fulness of his own heart should labor to infuse just sentiments into the hearts of all whom he addresses.

By these methods an impressiveness and earnestness will be given to a discourse. But let it be remembered that this earnestness, which a minister acquires by actually applying to his own character the truths he is anxious to impart, is very different from that vague, blind, and furious zeal, which is caught from imitation, which is kept alive because it is expected, which has no connexion with the understanding, and very little with the life; which only aims to excite a heat and tumult, and violent emotion in the hearts of hearers, and thinks very little of that mild and lasting improvement of

temper and conduct, in which religion essentially consists. From this irrational zeal, which disgusts the judicious, and makes weak minds frantic, let every preacher fly, who has any respect for his own character, or for the honor and influence of that religion which is committed to his care.

(To be continued.)

A LETTER FROM ONE CLERGYMAN TO ANOTHER, ON A MOST INTERESTING SUBJECT.

Rev. Sir,

I write that there may be no misunderstanding between us, on the subject of our late conversation, and that if I must fall under your censure, as a person destitute of true religion, it may not be from a misapprehension of my real views. The subject of debate, you will remember, was, "whether humility naturally leads a true christian to view himself as the chief of sinners;" and to use such expressions as this, "It seems to me no one has a heart so wicked as mine;"—and "whether it be proper for ministers to cultivate such ideas." From the surprise you manifested on my taking the negative side, I have been led to suppose, that you formerly had a favorable opinion of my religious character, and that my dissent from you on this subject has sunk me low in your esteem. As it is my intention to be frank in this letter, I now wish you to understand, that it is not in my heart to call in question your piety, or the piety of christians in general, who agree with you on the questions before us. I have, sir, been brought to believe, that if *true religion* and *erroneous opinions* cannot exist in the same person, there is not one religious

character in our world; that it is no more true, that no man liveth and sinneth not, than it is, that no man living is free from gross errors on subjects intimately connected with religion.

I will first state what I am willing to admit, and then give some reasons for my dissent from your opinion.

I am willing to admit,

1. That christian humility leads a person to be attentive to his own heart, and to become better acquainted with himself, than he can be with the hearts of others. Self-acquaintance and humility mutually tend to promote each other.

2. True humility disposes a person to observe the expressions of divine mercy, which he daily receives, and to compare the kindness of God, with the returns he makes to the Divine Benefactor. This contrast gives him an impressive view of his own unfruitfulness, and his want of love and gratitude. As he naturally has more acquaintance with his own defects, coldness, and wandering of affection, than he can have of these in other christians, whose walk is apparently upright and circumspect, it will be very natural for each of this class to esteem his

brethren as better, or more pious, than himself. This pious self-inspection and self-acquaintance produces that lowliness of mind, that moderate estimation of a person's own piety, and that esteem and charity for others, which the gospel requires. See Philip. ii. 3.

3. It is admitted, that many pious christians were once enormous transgressors, and in a view of what they *have* been, they may naturally adopt the strong language of Paul: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom *I am chief*." It is however believed, that this language had respect to what he *was while a persecutor* of the friends of Christ, and not to the *then state of his heart*. Although he had obtained the forgiveness of God, he could never forgive himself, that he had indulged such a blind and malignant zeal against the friends of Jesus. Perhaps, sir, there is more reason for some, at this day, to adopt similar language, than they now imagine.

4. Some persons, after conversion, and a public profession of religion, have committed atrocious offences, by which they have brought reproach on themselves, and on the cause of religion. When a spirit of contrition takes place in their hearts, it will not be unnatural for them to adopt language similar to that under consideration.

5. Some pious christians are constitutionally inclined to gloom and melancholy, and apt to put the most unfavorable construe-

tion on almost every thing which relates to their own character, or circumstances. Besides, those who are not *habitually* thus inclined, may be so *occasionally*. These facts will account for many exaggerated views and expressions respecting their own vileness; and this too without any impeachment of their moral integrity, or any evidence in favor of your hypothesis.

I shall now assign my reasons for dissenting from you in opinion.

1. I cannot admit, that true humility is of a nature to lead people to view things directly contrary to the truth of facts. But if christianity be in its nature excellent, if it really *reforms the heart and life*, and the true christian really views himself as the chief of sinners, or his own heart, in its present state, as more vile than any other person's, he views things directly contrary to the truth of facts, and is certainly under a delusion. Surely, sir, it can be no recommendation of humility, to represent it as of such a deluding tendency.

2. If it were habitual with true christians to entertain such views of themselves, it would be impossible for them to make a profession of religion in *sincerity* and *uprightness*. For it may be presumed, no christian views every profane and profligate character within the circle of his acquaintance, as in any measure fit to come to the table of the Lord. And if the true christian views himself as one of the worst of his species, he must be guilty of falsehood, if he profess-

es to have *any true religion at heart*. If he views his own heart as more vile than any other person's, he must view himself as the most unqualified person for communion with Christ or his saints. Can a person *honestly* profess to be in a state of penitent reconciliation with God, while at the same time he really views his own heart as a *sink of filth and wickedness*, no better than the heart of the *wilful blasphemer*? Is there not, sir, something like strong delusion in this business? and has your doctrine no tendency to prevent many persons of honest minds from making a profession of religion?

3. Would not almost any person, who uses such language, or any advocate for the use of such language, view himself as injured and defamed, if another person should represent him, as having the *most vile and wicked heart* of any of the sons of men? But if he really *views himself* in this light, why should he feel injured, to find that others have the same opinion of his character?

4. If your sentiments be according to truth, how is it possible that real christians should hesitate in regard to admitting to their fellowship, the most abandoned wretches that tread the ground? If they view themselves as having the most wicked hearts, they must view these profligate characters, as more fit for a place in the church than themselves. This, it is believed, must certainly be the consequence, unless the christian infers from the fact of his viewing himself as the *most vile*, that he

is really a *good person*. But, then, what shall we do with this contradiction in his own views of himself? Does he *still* view himself as the *most vile*, while he infers from this view, that he is really *renewed and better* than the profligate? Is there not, sir, reason to fear, that *some* persons make use of your sentiment for self-deception, and for deceiving others? Having brought themselves to use such language, do they not infer from it their own safety, and recommend themselves as pious persons to those of your opinion?

5. Is it not a fact, that those, who adopt your views of the nature of humility, are very apt to question the religion of any man, who doubts the propriety of a christian's saying, that he views his own heart as the vilest of all? Now, sir, if you are sincere in saying, that you view your own heart as the *most vile*, how came you to be so jealous of me, that my religion was vain? You profess to believe, that none but *good people* have a right to preach the gospel; yet you preach the gospel, while professing to view your *own heart* as the worst: Not only so, you doubt my having any true religion, because I cannot adopt such language. Does it then appear, that you really view your *own heart* to be *more vile than mine*?

6. I have another question to ask, which you may set down among the reasons for my dissent. Is it not an awful truth, that too many ministers and private christians, who adopt your views of humility, are nevertheless very uncharitable in their

feelings and conduct towards christians of other sects? In how many instances do they refuse fellowship with other ministers and other christians, whose walk is as blameless as their own? How could this be, if they were really in the habit of viewing themselves as *more vile* than any other people? Is it not manifest, sir, that, in contradiction to their professed views of their own hearts, they really esteem themselves *much better* than any who dissent from their opinions. Although I do not wish they

Rev. ——— ———

should view themselves as the *most vile creatures on earth*, I sincerely wish they had enough of gospel humility, to produce more gospel charity; and more of that kind and forbearing spirit, in which consists much of the glory and the blessedness of the christian religion.

As the subject of the letter is one in which many are concerned, I shall send it to you through the medium of the Christian Disciple, should the Editor have no objection.*

Yours with brotherly esteem,

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STRIKING EXAMPLE OF SUBMISSION.

Mr. ELIOT of Roxbury, commonly called the apostle to the Indians, was deprived of his four sons; three of whom had been settled in the ministry, and the fourth a candidate. On being asked how he could maintain so

much cheerfulness under such afflictive bereavements, he replied, "I had hoped that my sons would live to serve God on earth, but as he has seen fit to take them to serve him in heaven, what should I object?"

POETRY.

HYMN FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR.

THE opening year demands our
praise,
To him whose power prolongs our days,
Unnumbered souls from life have fled;
Why are not we among the dead?

God's sovereign mercy kept our
breath,
Or we had slept the sleep of death.
Shall we long-suffering love despise,
Or from ungrateful slumberings rise?

This year its millions will demand
To be entombed by sea and land;

Our turn *must* come—this year it
may,
But who knows when?—perhaps to-
day!

Are we prepared to meet the Lord?
Have we obeyed his heavenly word?
If not, to-day attend his call,
Give him our hearts, our time, our all.

For favors past, let thanks arise;
For sins, let tears bedew our eyes;
While God's rich mercy flows around
May ceaseless songs of praise abound.

* [This letter has been admitted because the subject of it is of great practical importance. If the person, for whom it was particularly designed, or any other reader, shall be dissatisfied with the sentiments expressed, and will forward a well written and candid reply, he may expect that it will find a place in our columns. Ed.]

THE SENTIMENTS OF THE THIRD PSALM.

LORD! what severe, what deep distress!
How dread my foes, how numberless!
Encompassed sore on every side
By fiends who taunt me and deride.

In vain he trusts in God, say they,
He leans upon a feeble stay.
The God to whom his soul resorts
His best adorers ne'er supports.

But to such tauntings shall I yield?
Oh no! my God, my heavenly shield!
My great supporter and my boast,
With thee I never shall be lost.

My prayer I offered to the Lord,
And raised to heaven my suppliant word,
Still as I urged, he heard; and still
Responded from his holy hill.

In the soft slumbers of the night,
O'er all my frame he spreads delight,
And as I wake, I find his arm
Has kept me still from every harm.

I will not fear ten thousand foes,
While on my God I thus repose;
Though myriads should beset me round,
Yet shall I safe with him be found.

Oh Lord! my Saviour God, arise!
Preserve me from these enemies.
For thou hast shown to them thy power,
And didst in wrath their strength devour.

Salvation to the Lord belongs!
Praise him with everlasting songs;
Thy people are forever blest,
They shall enjoy the heavenly rest.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE TERRIBLE INQUISITION IN SPAIN.

IN our last number we presented our readers with a concise account of the Spanish Inquisition, the protest of the Nuncio against its abolition, and some remarks on that protest. It is now stated, that the Nuncio was banished for persisting in his opposition. From the date and contents of the protest we were led to suppose, that the decree of abolition took place "about the first of March." We have since been obliged by the perusal of a manuscript containing a translation of the speech, which produced the all-important decree. From which it appears, that the speech was delivered January 18, 1813, and the decree of abolition took place the 26th of the same month. The translator in his preface informs, that the subject was under the consideration of the "Committee of the Constitution" for a year; that their report "appeared more like a problem, than a direct attack on the formidable tribunal;" that after the report, "more than a month, continued the contest;

and never was debate more vehement, more terrible, more obstinate, more clamorous, than that occasioned by the Inquisition in the national Congress of Spain." He adds, "I was eyewitness to this combat between light and darkness, philosophy and error, illustration and fanaticism."—"At length, on the 18th of January, appeared a new champion in the august Congress, hitherto little known, Doctor Dn. Antonio Joseph Ruiz de Padron." This man was a "qualified minister" of the terrible tribunal, and well prepared to display it, in all its horrors. He was indeed a Roman Catholic in sentiment; and we must of course expect, that his speech will contain some things in which protestants cannot acquiesce. But considering his education, his profession and employment, we cannot but admire his independence, intrepidity, humanity, and piety.

Believing that it will not be injurious or displeasing to the translator, we shall state the points which the

orator aimed to substantiate, and give some specimens of his style and eloquence. We presume that it is the intention of the translator to favor the public with the whole in our language, and we hope it will soon appear. The speech is very long, but so able and interesting, that its length occasions no fatigue. That certain phrases or forms of address may be understood by all our readers, it may be proper to observe, that the orator addressed the Regency, as it would have been proper to address the King, had he been personally present. After a short introduction, he stated the three following propositions:—

"1. The tribunal of the Inquisition is totally useless in the church of God.

"2. This tribunal is diametrically opposite to the wise and religious constitution, which your Majesty has sanctioned, and the people have sworn to.

"3. The tribunal of the Inquisition is not only prejudicial to the prosperity of the state, but even contrary to the spirit of the gospel, which it pretends to defend."

Each of the propositions is supported with such ability, intrepidity and eloquence, as will secure to the orator immortal fame.

Our extracts will be taken from what is said in support of the third proposition. After mentioning the depopulating, debasing, and demoralizing influence of the tribunal in Spain, and a number of the most eminent characters, which had been destroyed by it, he adds—

"I should be too prolix, were I to present to the Congress the immense catalogue of men of learning and erudition, which the tribunal has sacrificed to its fury. Its atrocious and despotic proceeding causes horror. And is it possible that so monstrous an establishment has been suffered hitherto to exist, under pretext of religion? And is it possible that there are still those, who sigh to offer adoration and perfume to this *golden calf*? Philosophers, divines, historians, statesmen, politicians, orators, poets, mechanics, artists, the merchant, and even the

simple labourer, the prop and principal support of the state, have not escaped its rod of iron. In a word, men and women, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, innocent and guilty, every order of men, has this tribunal affrighted with the terror of its power.

"Every page of the New Testament breathes meekness, peace, and charity, pity and compassion, which are the appropriate characters of our religion; of that religion so holy, so august, so divine; which neither flesh nor blood could have revealed, and none but our heavenly Father.

"Every document which our divine Founder gave us, tends to exercise in christians the principles of eternal charity. Not one inclines to rigor, nor coercion, nor violence, much less cruelty, which would be far foreign to the Celestial Shepherd, who came to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The power of his grace attracted disciples, the example of his continual charity preserved them. This religion reproves violence and persecution, detests coercion and inhumanity.

"The Inquisition not only carries off, by violence, the parishioners from a bishoprick, whether laymen, ecclesiastics, or curates, without making the least account of the bishop, but even tears the bishops themselves from their flocks, like a hungry and ravenous wolf, which after destroying and devouring the sheep, falls on the shepherd and carries him off.

"A commissary of the Holy Office, accompanied by his officers, is authorized to enter houses with impunity, although at midnight, with mysterious silence, and tear the father from the bosom of his family, struck with panic fear; for not even is he permitted to say a last adieu to his spouse and children—condemned to eternal infamy, the only patrimony this wretched father can transmit to his posterity. Whole generations, previous to their existence, are sentenced thus, not only to poverty and mendicancy, but also to ignominy and opprobrium.

"Thus does the Inquisition, at one blow, deprive society of useful and la-

horious citizens, and bury them in infectious dungeons. It has even invented more. In the edict which is termed the "edict of faith," promulgated yearly among every people, where this exotic tribunal resides, all those who may be apprehensive of being denounced by others, are generally invited to come forward, and accuse themselves. To those who obey within a certain space of time, pardon is promised; but to those who resist, no mercy will be shown. They will be arrested, their property confiscated, and they will suffer besides all the penalties of the law.—Such impressions did this infernal invention, supported by rigor and despotism, make on the minds of the Spaniards, that in less than forty years, in Andalusia alone, near thirty thousand people came forward voluntarily, to denounce themselves, and many of them, to accuse themselves of crimes, which they neither understood, nor could commit; such as sorcery, witchcraft, contact with the devil, and other such ridiculous absurdities, with which the simple vulgar have been so grossly imposed upon. Where are we, sire? How long are we to remain the scoff and ludibrium of nations? Unhappy mankind! that is ever exposed to the caprice of despotism and error? Let these iniquitous proceedings be now compared with the article of the constitution already quoted; let a parallel be drawn between the two legislations, whilst I pass on to describe, if possible, the kind of torment, which the tribunal has employed in the confession of the guilty, either actual or imaginary; and afterwards examine, whether they can be combined with the maxims of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here a new scene of horror presents itself, which offers violence to christian ears.—I will fancy myself viewing the most obstinate heretic, the most daring apostate, or the most rebellious Jew. He has either confessed or is convicted. In the first case, after a thousand mysterious questions, sentence is passed on him. But in the second, besides confinement in the most obscure dungeons, bereft of all human

consolation, torments are employed on him, to extort confessions so horrible, that human nature shudders at them. A pulley hung from the roof, through which a strong rope is passed, is the first spectacle which presents itself to the eyes of the unhappy man. The ministers of the Inquisition load him with chains, tie to his ancles one hundred pounds of iron; they turn in his arms on his back, and bind them with a cord; they manacle his wrists with a thong, they hoist him aloft, and let him fall violently and with a jerk twelve times; which is sufficient to dislocate the most robust frame. But if he still does not confess what the Inquisitors require, the tortures of the rack await him, where, bound by the feet and hands, the wretched victim sustains eight blows; and if he still maintains his innocence, they cause him to swallow immense quantities of water, to make him experience the pains of the drowned. But this is not sufficient, the bloody scene is at length completed by the torments of the brazier, where his naked feet, anointed with fat, and secured in stocks, are cruelly *fried by a slow fire*. I must at length desist, not to scandalize farther those who hear me. My pen resists those horrible descriptions, which can only be compared to the feasts of the Anthropophagi, or the cannibals of the south.

"Rome, the famous Rome, accustomed in the days of her greatest relaxation to the most cruel spectacles, in the sanguinary combats of the Gladiators, shuddered at the punishment of the *bonfire*, as the most horrible of all. But the *Holy Office* is horrorized at nothing, when treating of heretics. And should they be *Jews*, sure they were of the bonfire. "*Give me a Jew, and I will return him to you roasted,*" was the barbarous phrase, which the inhuman Lucero Inquisitor of Cordova had incessantly in his mouth.

"I must not omit, sire, that its authority extends even to the regions of the dead. How often has it not ordered the sepulchre to be excavated to unbury the skeletons of those whom

it has suspected to have died in heresy, to throw them into the flames! Mournful relicks of the human lineage! Lamentable trophies of death! Respectable shades of those who perhaps have passed to another life in innocence, the victims of calumny, rancor, or revenge!"

From these few extracts, our readers will be able to form some idea of the ability and spirit of, perhaps, one of the most interesting speeches, which has ever been pronounced by man. If it be thought proper to preserve the speeches of conquerors, who have deluged countries with human blood, what is due to a speech, which has freed ten millions of our brethren from the terrors of the most frightful tribunal that ever existed in our world? What were the conquests of *Alexander*, compared with the conquests of *RUIZ DE PADRON*? A man who has thus exposed his property, his charac-

ter, and his life, to free his countrymen from the most oppressive and debasing ecclesiastical tyranny; and has by the powers of reasoning and eloquence, overcome habits and prejudices, which had for ages been gaining strength, deserves the admiration and applause of all mankind. If we consider the peril of the enterprise, the difficulties to be encountered, the means employed, the intrepidity displayed, the success of the effort, and the importance of the result, history can hardly furnish another example of equal splendor.

The obliging translator will accept our cordial thanks for the loan of the manuscript; and our readers will excuse the omission of other articles of intelligence, to give place to a more full exhibition of the importance of an event, which must fill the christian world with joy.

New Publications.

Two sermons on infidelity, delivered October 24, 1813. By William Ellery Channing, minister of the church in Federal street, Boston. Boston, Cummings & Hilliard.

[Some extracts from these sermons are omitted, to give place to original communications.]

Review of a book, entitled, "The grounds of Christianity examined, by comparing the New Testament with the Old. By George Bethune English, A. M." By Samuel Cary, one of

the ministers of the chapel, Boston. Boston, I. Thomas, jun.

Evangelical History; or a narrative of the life, doctrines, and miracles of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour, and of his apostles; containing the Four Gospels and the Acts: with a general introduction, giving a concise view of the leading arguments in favor of the divine origin of Christianity; prefatory remarks to each book; and notes, critical and explanatory. By Alden Bradford. Boston, Bradford & Read.

Ordination.

DECEMBER 8, 1813, Rev. Francis Parkman, as Pastor of the New North Religious Society, in Boston. Introductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Lowell. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Channing. Or-

daining prayer by Rev. Dr. Kirkland. Charge by Rev. Dr. Lathrop. Right Hand by Rev. Mr. Tuckerman, of Chelsea. Concluding prayer by Rev. Mr. Hurd, of Lynn.

Candidates for the ministry in Cambridge and its vicinity.

Rev. Mr. Leonard, Boston.
Mr. William Popkin, Malden,
Mr. Samuel Sewall, Cambridge.
Mr. John White, do.
Mr. Joseph Field, Boston.

Mr. Timothy Hilliard, Cambridge.
Mr. Lemuel Capen, do.
Mr. John E. Abbot, Boston.
Mr. Joseph Haven, Cambridge.
Mr. David Damon, do.